

SIGOURNEY!

Serious intellectual or frivolous airhead?

SOME of the the more highbrow interviewers who have met Sigourney Weaver in the past have been distinctly underwhelmed.

For one thing, the willowy, elegant actress has held forth at considerable length on how she regards herself as a New York stage actress (read serious intellectual) rather than a Hollywood star (read frivolous airhead).

At the same time, she was promoting Tinseltown products such as *Alien* and its sequel and *Ghostbusters* — hardly “art” films.

And then there was the time Sigourney referred to Meryl Streep as her nemesis when she clearly meant *bete noire*. If you are going to use clever-sounding words, the intelligentsia clucked, you really should use them correctly.

Now, it appears, Sigourney has won over the knockers, and the main reason is one of two new films in which she stars — *Gorillas In The Mist*, for which she recently won Best Actress at the Golden Globe Awards.

She plays Dian Fossey, the primatologist who lived with the mountain gorillas of east central Africa. Fossey's passion for saving the animals from extinction led her to excesses such as setting fire to poachers' camps.

By the time she was murdered in 1985 by an unknown assassin, her enemies — including a sizeable number of society poachers, rival conservationists and local government officials — insisted she had gone insane.

“Dian was a fantastic woman, a real woman, a woman of extremes,” insists Sigourney. “A lot of people called her crazy, but you have to understand that much of what people would call ‘crazy’ behavior sprang from deep hurt.”





RIGHT: Sigourney Weaver won a Golden Globe award for her portrayal of Dian Fossey in *Gorillas In The Mist*.
 ABOVE: Sigourney (right) with Harrison Ford and Melanie Griffith, her co-stars in *Working Girls*.

"The gorillas were her dearest friends. She had confidence with them that she just didn't feel when she was with people. She had great love for them.

"Now, when your dear friends are mutilated and killed, as these gorillas were, and for no good reason, you do crazy things."

The second film which has audiences — and critics — sitting up and taking renewed interest in Sigourney is *Working Girls*, in which she co-stars with Melanie Griffith and Harrison Ford.

6 Dian was a fantastic woman, a real woman, a woman of extremes 9

The Mike Nichols-directed movie garnered Sigourney a second Golden Globe, this time as Best Supporting Actress.

"I play a very confident, well-educated, ruthless, awful woman — I like the part very much," she says. As she speaks, she is interrupted by a loud noise from somewhere outside. She looks puzzled.

"What on Earth was I saying?" she asks. "I've lost my point. Probably just as well!"

One last question. How, in one sentence, would she describe Sigourney Weaver?

"Well, tall," she says peering down at her 177cm figure. "This is an embarrassing question! I think ... sincere. Yes, tall and sincere."

From Gabrielle Donnelly in London

